

Amendments to the Claim:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-61 (cancelled).

62 (currently amended). A memory for storing data in a computer, the memory comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium; and

(1) at least one user data structure stored in the medium, the user data structure comprising data concerning one or more users, where for each user, there exists one or more fields providing contact information for the user, where the user may be an expert or a customer,

(2) an expert data structure stored in the medium, the expert data structure comprising data concerning one or more experts, where, for each expert, there exists

(a) one or more fields defining at least one time period of availability of the expert for performing a project, and

(b) one or more fields defining at least one category of expertise or experience of the expert and a level of expertise or experience of the expert with respect to each such category,

(3) a project data structure stored in the medium, the project data structure comprising data concerning one or more projects, where, for each project, there exists

(a) one or more fields identifying the customer within said user data structure,

(b) one or more fields defining at least one

desired time period of availability of an expert for performing the project,

(c) one or more fields defining the desired level of expertise or experience of the expert in each of one or more categories of expertise or experience, and

(d) one or more fields defining a level of priority to said customer, for said project, of expertise equaling or exceeding each of the desired levels of (c) above, said priority being specifiable independently of said desired level of expertise, wherein the priority (d) is specifiable independently of the desired level of expertise (c); and

~~wherein for each expert, the level of expertise or experience is defined on a hierarchical basis comprising at least two tiers, and for each project, the desired level of expertise or experience and the priority of that desired level is defined on a hierarchical basis comprising at least two tiers~~

(4) a match data structure resulting from comparison of the expert data structure with the project data structure, said data structure assigning to each expert a match score that takes into account the level of expertise or experience of the expert in each of one or more of said categories, the level of expertise desired by the customer in one or more of said categories, and the priority assigned by the customer to expertise in each of said categories, and wherein an expert is not excluded from said match data structure merely because, in one or more categories, the expert's level of expertise is less than the customer's desired level of expertise.

63 (cancelled).

64 (previously presented). The memory of claim 62 in which the expert is an expert in the biological sciences and the categories of expertise or experience relate to the biological sciences.

65 (cancelled).

66 (previously presented). The memory of claim 62 which comprises a data structure indicating the availability of contact information on one user to another user.

67 (previously presented). The memory of claim 62 wherein for each expert, the level of expertise or experience is defined on a hierarchical basis consisting at least two tiers, and for each project, the desired level of expertise or experience and the priority of that desired level is defined on a hierarchical basis consisting at least two tiers.

68 (previously presented). The memory of claim 64 wherein for each expert, the level of expertise or experience is defined on a hierarchical basis consisting at least two tiers, and for each project, the desired level of expertise or experience and the priority of that desired level is defined on a hierarchical basis consisting at least two tiers.

69 (new). A memory for storing data in a computer, the memory comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium; and

(1) at least one user data structure stored in the medium, the user data structure comprising data concerning one or more users, where for each user, there exists one or more fields providing contact information for the user, where the user may be an expert or a customer,

(2) an expert data structure stored in the medium, the expert data structure comprising data concerning one or more experts, where, for each expert, there exists

(a) one or more fields defining at least one

time period of availability of the expert for performing a project, and

(b) one or more fields defining at least one category of expertise or experience of the expert and the level of expertise or experience of the expert with respect to each such category,

(3) a project data structure stored in the medium, the project data structure comprising data concerning one or more projects, where, for each project, there exists

(a) one or more fields identifying the customer within said user data structure,

(b) one or more fields defining at least one desired time period of availability of an expert for performing the project, and

(c) one or more fields defining the desired level of expertise or experience of the expert in each of one or more categories of expertise or experience,

(d) one or more fields defining the level of priority to said customer, for said project, of each of the desired levels of (c) above,

wherein one or more of the user, expert or project data structure fields is considered a confidential information field,

(4) an access control data structure stored in the medium, which comprises one or more fields specifying each user's access to confidential information fields concerning another user, such structure permitting the access of an expert to confidential information of a customer to be controlled separately from the customer's access to confidential information for that expert.

70 (new). The memory of claim 62 wherein for each expert,

the level of expertise or experience is defined on a hierarchical basis comprising at least two tiers, and for each project, the desired level of expertise or experience and the priority of that desired level is defined on a hierarchical basis comprising at least two tiers.

71 (new). The memory of claim 62 in which the ranking is a weighted average, over the categories specified as desired by the customer, of the difference between expert's level of expertise and the customer's desired level of expertise, with the customer's priority for that category being the weighting factor.

72 (new). The method of claim 62 in which the ranking penalizes an expert whose level of expertise in a category is less than the customer's desired level of expertise, but does not give a bonus to an expert's ranking for having a level of expertise which exceeds the desired level of expertise.

73 (new). The method of claim 72 in which said penalty is weighted according to the customer's priority for that category.